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TAGS: [PINR](#) [BEXP](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [CO](#) [VE](#)
SUBJECT: (U) TENSIONS BETWEEN COLOMBIA AND VENEZUELA
(C-AL9-02389)

Classified By: ELISSA G. PITTERLE, DIRECTOR, INR/OPS. REASON: 1.4(C).

11. (S/NF) WASHINGTON ANALYSTS HAVE INTENSE INTEREST IN THE DEVELOPING CONFLICT BETWEEN COLOMBIA AND VENEZUELA. AS TIME AND RESOURCES ALLOW, WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INSIGHT POST COULD PROVIDE THAT MIGHT SHED LIGHT ON HOW BOGOTA IS REACTING TO THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND MILITARY STEPS CARACAS IS TAKING TO PROVOKE THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT. THE QUESTIONS THAT FOLLOW ARE DESIGNED TO GUIDE POST WITH RESPECT TO THE ISSUES WE ARE PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN. MANY THANKS FROM WASHINGTON.

1A. (S/NF) TO WHOM IS BOGOTA REACHING OUT DIPLOMATICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY FOR ASSISTANCE IN ITS MOST RECENT SPAT WITH CARACAS, BOTH REGIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY? WHAT OUTCOMES WOULD BOGOTA VIEW MOST FAVORABLY? DOES BOGOTA EXPECT A STRONGER PUBLIC RESPONSE IN ITS FAVOR FROM THE UNITED STATES, BEYOND SEEKING THE US'S PUBLIC CRITICISM OF CHAVEZ'S WARLIKE RHETORIC? WHAT OTHER COUNTRIES DOES BOGOTA EXPECT TO PUBLICLY OR PRIVATELY SUPPORT IT?

1B. (S/NF) WHAT ARE COLOMBIA'S PLANS TO FIND ALTERNATIVE MARKETS FOR PRODUCTS THAT NO LONGER GO TO VENEZUELA? WHAT ARE COLOMBIA'S PLANS FOR PURSUING THE WTO ROUTE TO SETTLE DISPUTES, AND ARE THERE ANY PLANS TO IMPOSE ITS OWN TRADE BARRIERS?

1C. (S/NF) HOW IS BOGOTA REACTING TO CALLS FOR DIALOGUE FROM COUNTRIES LIKE BRAZIL, PANAMA, AND SPAIN? HOW DOES BOGOTA VIEW BRASILIA'S OFFER TO MEDIATE THE DISPUTE? DO URIBE OR SENIOR COLOMBIAN OFFICIALS VIEW BRAZILIAN PRESIDENT LULA AS A VIABLE MEDIATOR? WOULD COLOMBIAN OFFICIALS, INCLUDING URIBE, BE WILLING TO SIT DOWN WITH BOTH LULA AND CHAVEZ TO DISCUSS THIS ISSUE?

1D. (S/NF) HOW DOES BOGOTA PLAN TO RESPOND TO CHAVEZ'S CALL FOR DEALING WITH THE ISSUE AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL, INSTEAD OF TAKING IT TO THE UN?

1E. (S/NF) WHY WOULD BOGOTA CHOOSE TO FOREGO OAS MEDIATION, IN FAVOR OF HEADING STRAIGHT TO THE UN? HOW DOES BOGOTA VIEW THE OAS'S ABILITY TO MEDIATE IN THIS CONFLICT, GIVEN COLOMBIA'S PAST NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES WITH THE ORGANIZATION? DOES BOGOTA VIEW THE UN AS MORE FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO DEALING WITH THIS ISSUE?

1F. (S/NF) ARE THERE INDICATIONS FROM URIBE'S INNER CIRCLE OR COLOMBIA'S POLITICAL ELITE THAT THEY FAVOR MEDIATION FROM CERTAIN COUNTRIES AND NOT OTHERS?

1G. (S/NF) HOW DOES URIBE COMPARE THIS SPAT TO PREVIOUS DIPLOMATIC CONFLICTS (E.G., RAUL REYES FALLOUT IN 2008, THE GRANDA AFFAIR IN 2005) WITH THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT? DOES HE SEE IT AS MORE SERIOUS OR LESS THREATENING? DOES URIBE GIVE CONSIDERABLE WEIGHT TO OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE TO RESOLVE THIS CONFLICT, OR IS HE MORE INTERESTED IN TRYING TO DAMPEN THE CONFLICT HIMSELF?

1H. (U) IS PRESIDENT URIBE FEELING ANY POLITICAL PRESSURE

FROM BORDER POPULATIONS TO ENSURE THE BORDER STAYS OPEN?

¶I. (U) ASIDE FROM CREATING A STATE PRESENCE ALONG THE BORDER, DOES URIBE PLAN TO INCREASE SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS ALONG THE BORDER?

¶J. (S) WHAT IS BOGOTA'S STRATEGY (IF ANY) TO PROTECT COLOMBIAN BUSINESSES IN VENEZUELA FROM POSSIBLE HARASSMENT OR EXPROPRIATION?

¶2. (U) PLEASE CITE C-AL9-02389 IN THE SUBJECT LINE OF REPORTING IN RESPONSE TO THE ABOVE QUESTIONS.
CLINTON